Indonesian President's Visit

*738. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indonesian President visited India in the month of April, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the purpose of visit was to strengthen economic ties;

(c) whether any agreement has been reached between the two countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. H.E. Mrs. Megawati Soekarnoputri, President of the Republic of Indonesia paid a State Visit to India from 1-5 April, 2002.

(b) The purpose of the visit was to strengthen bilateral ties in all fields including the economic.

(c) and (d) There following Agreements were signed between the two countries during the visit:

(i) MOU between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Indonesian National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN) on Cooperation in the Field of Outer Space Research and Development;

(ii) MOU concerning setting up of a Vocational Training Centre for Construction Sector in Jakarta;

(iii) Agreement on Visa Exemption for Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders.

Eradication of Poverty

*739. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether inadequate funds are blocking developmental goals to reduce poverty to half by 2015; and

(b) the action proposed to set up efforts to remove economic hurdles for fulfilment of millennium goals to eradicate poverty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) At the UN Millennium Summit held in September 2000, 180 countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals as a Declaration.One of the goals is of eradicating extreme poverty which has set the target of halving the proportion of people whose income/consumption is less than one dollar a day between 1990 and 2015. In India as per the official estimates of poverty the percentage of population living below the poverty line has declined from 38.86 percent in 1987-88 to 26.10 percent in 1999-2000. Further, a reduction of poverty ratio by 5 percentage points by 2007 and by 15 percentage points by 2012 has been outlined in the Approach Paper to the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007).

The Tenth Five Year Plan which is presently under formulation would detail the efforts being made in this direction. While poverty reduction does not depend on funds alone, it may be mentioned that the Government of India has adopted a three pronged strategy for reducing poverty. It comprises of (i) accelerated economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive; (ii) human and social development through basic minimum services; and (iii) targeted anti-poverty programmes. Further, it is recognized that poverty can be effectively eradicated only with the active participation of the poor in the growth process. Therefore, social mobilization and empowerment of the poor through the Panchayati Raj Institutions, voluntary organization, Self Help Groups and other user groups has been taken up in order to improve delivery of the various development schemes including anti-poverty programmes.

Stock position of FCI Godowns

*740. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that FCI godowns are overflowing and stocks of foodgrains lying in the open are rotting even as millions of poor people go hungry;

(b) if so, the details of FCI stocks as on the 31st March, 2002; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to dispose of the excess quantity of foodgrains during the last two years and with what results?